



ARK KINGS ACADEMY
ATTENDANCE POLICY

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GENERAL STATEMENT

Ark Kings Academy believes that regular, punctual school attendance is vital for high achievement in order that students can be the best that they can be. Absence from school is recognised as a safeguarding issue as it places children at risk and in some cases it can result in students being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Regular attendance of students is closely related to their levels of achievement. This makes the issue of regular attendance of great importance. Under education legislation, parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so, without reasonable excuse, can result in referrals to the Education Welfare Service with the prospect of fines or prosecution for those parents, should a child's attendance not improve rapidly.

EXPECTATIONS

Good attendance and punctuality depend on a partnership between students, parents and carers, the academy and outside bodies. For its part, the school expects the following from students and parents and itself follows this practice:

Students are expected to:

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive in school in good time, for lineup at 8.25 am each morning.
- Attend all lessons promptly.

Parents are expected to

- Make sure that their children attend school regularly.
- Make sure that their children arrive at school in good time, for lineup at 8.25 am each morning.
- Contact the academy by telephone (**0121 459 4451**) on the first day of absence if their child is unable to attend for any reason, followed by a written note on return.
- Ensure that their children are in proper school uniform.
- Ensure that their children are properly equipped for school.
- Arrange medical appointments outside school time where possible.
- Ensure that no holidays are booked during term time.
- Contact their child's tutor to discuss any concerns that they may have and which could affect their child's attendance.
- Ensure that the school has up to date contact details.

Ark Kings Academy are expected to:

- Register students efficiently and accurately during lesson 1 and again during lesson 5 according to current regulations.
- Staff are expected to use the ePortal section of the Academy's Information Management System to record at each lesson and at registration, the attendance, lateness and authorised absence data.
- Student Support Managers will telephone parents if a child is absent
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation if absences persist and refer poor attendance on to relevant authorities.
- All staff should emphasize at all times the importance of good attendance.
- In cases of concern a tutor or member of staff must be mindful of the safeguarding policy and implications around non-attendance; thereby notifying the safeguarding coordinator.

- Promote attendance by taking account of each student’s individual needs.
- Co-operate fully with other agencies to encourage punctual attendance at school.
- Provide regular reports on each student’s attendance to parents.
- Set demanding yet realistic targets for whole school attendance.
- Reward students with positive attendance.

PROMOTING HIGH ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Attendance data is monitored from the beginning of each academic year and also from the beginning of each half term. By tracking the attendance data in this way the academy is able to monitor and reward improvements and to take swift action if a students attendance is below the targeted level.

Attendance is also monitored at different levels: individual students, form group, year group and whole school.

Attendance Bands: When monitoring attendance, the school uses 5 colour-coded bands.

98-100%	95-97%	90-94%	85-89%	Below 85%
<p>Absent for fewer than 5 days in the year.</p> <p>As well as being an excellent attendee, you will almost certainly achieve the best grades for your ability and have a real opportunity in further education or the world of work.</p>	<p>Absent for fewer than 10 days in the year.</p> <p>We say you are WISE regarding attendance, and are likely to achieve grades that will give real opportunities to continue in your studies or in the world of work.</p>	<p>Missing up to 20 days school each year.</p> <p>A full month lost!</p> <p>You will be performing a full grade lower than you would if your attendance was above 98%</p>	<p>Missing up to 30 days each year!</p> <p>That is six full weeks missed in the year!</p> <p>You NEED TO WISE UP!</p> <p>Missing so much time from school makes it difficult for you to keep in touch with lessons or work.</p>	<p>You need to WISE UP NOW!</p> <p>Missing so much time from school means that it will be almost impossible for you to keep in touch with lessons or work.</p>

The basic process consists of:

- regular and frequent analysis of the data and then
- reviewing what is necessary and working well and
- devising new strategies to improve attendance and punctuality.

More specifically:

- Staff are expected to use the ePortal section of the Academy's Information Management System to record at each lesson and at registration, the attendance, lateness and authorised absence data.
- Form Tutors regularly analyse the attendance of their form group and actively promote great attendance through form time and through the form display.

- Heads of Year Learning analyse the attendance statistics of their respective cohorts each week, aiming to encourage high attendance and good punctuality through leadership of their year group, through assemblies, group meetings and one-to-one meetings with parents, and through working closely with the Student Support Managers and Education Social Worker (ESW).
- Action on attendance is identified by Heads of Year Learning and the Pastoral VP in order to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of the strategies and procedures adopted.
- Student Support Managers monitor attendance on a daily basis, making sure that the raw attendance data is as accurate as possible, making calls to parents/carers for unauthorised absence on the first-day and making home visits.
- A designated Student Support Manager is the primary liaison point with ESW, producing fortnightly reports and analysis to monitor individual and group attendance.
- The designated person liaises with the SLT member with responsibility for attendance to coordinate action on poor attendance through the use of Attendance panels held jointly with ESW. This action on persistent absence - defined nationally as less than 90%.

REWARDING GREAT ATTENDANCE

Great attendance will be regularly rewarded through assemblies, certificates, badges, trips, special events and reward ceremonies.

Please see our **Behaviour Policy** for more information about rewards.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half -day absence from school has to be recorded and classified with a code by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only the school can make this decision and record it.

This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

AUTHORISED absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, hospital appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

UNAUTHORISED absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which “leave” of absence has not been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Some examples of this include:

- Parents/carers keeping their child away from school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences that have not been properly explained;
- Late arrival after the close of registration (morning or afternoon);
- Shopping trips, looking after other children or adults, or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed.
- Illness

Whilst it is understood that any child can have an illness and be away from school for a given period, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance

are always best sorted out by the parents/carers contacting school immediately to discuss the issues.

If your child is reluctant to attend:

- Please do not cover up the absence;
- Please do not give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. If you do either of these things, the situation will only worsen and become a habit and the causes will be harder to find and the resolution difficult. The school needs to give careful consideration to the authorisation of absence for some pupils.

Where a pupil has frequent absences the school may decide to ask for evidence such as a medical certificate, appointment card, or a label from prescription medication.

DENTAL/MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Wherever possible, parents/cares should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or at the beginning or end of the school day. An appointment at the beginning of the school day should not result in a whole day's absence from school.

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The academy co-operates fully with the work of Birmingham City Council, especially in regard to court action in appropriate cases and to the off-rolling procedures we follow in regard to safeguarding pupil safety.

OTHER AREAS OF ARK KINGS ACADEMY WHICH AFFECT ATTENDANCE

Students will come to school more regularly if they like being here and can work in a safe, purposeful environment.

It is therefore, essential that all staff are mindful of :

- Providing a welcoming, safe and disciplined learning environment
- Students engaging with pastoral support
- A suitable and stimulating curriculum
- Inspiring and challenging teaching
- Targeted curriculum support
- Child Protection and issues around safeguarding to support the Every Child Matters agenda
- Extended schools opportunities to engage student interest and enjoyment

It is essential that these aspects of school life are seen as part of the drive to encourage students to be the best that they can be in order to instil the values of good attendance and punctuality at the academy.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a “persistent absentee” when they are absent from school for 10% or more across the school year for whatever reason. The reasons can be both authorised and/or unauthorised.

Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child’s educational achievement and future prospects. We will need the full support and co-operation of all parents to tackle this.

- We will monitor all absence thoroughly;
- If your child’s attendance has reached or is in danger of reaching the PA level we will inform you immediately and make the case a priority;
- All PA pupils and their parents will be subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: the allocation of additional support through a mentor, individual programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance;
- All PA pupils will be made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

LEAVE DURING TERM TIME (EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE)

The Department for Education has amended the regulations and guidance in relation to absences in term-time. There is **no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time**. From 1st September 2013, the Department for Education will only allow a head teacher to grant a leave of absence if there are ***exceptional circumstances***. In determining whether or not an absence in such circumstances can be authorised, it is for the head teacher to determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

If you consider that your request falls into this category you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notification. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If the absence requested is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in line with County Council guidance.

Therefore, in the case of an unauthorised absence the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service will be notified and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this will result further legal intervention.

All absence requests must be completed on the attached form, letters will not be accepted. This should be returned to the school a minimum of 14 days before the start of the absence.

Any absence from school will disrupt your child’s learning. You may consider some absences to be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive. Children returning from an absence are unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other students in the class. This is something we *all* have a responsibility to avoid.

THE ATTENDANCE SERVICE

Parents are expected and encouraged to contact the school at an early stage and work together with school staff in resolving problems together. This approach is nearly always successful.

If this does not resolve the problem, the school will refer your child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the local authority. They are independent of the school and can provide impartial advice.

The EWO will work together with you and the school in order to resolve the difficulty and return your child to regular attendance.

In this school, to ensure that we promote early intervention and prevent absence from becoming chronic, this school together with the LA, will make use of the Fast Track to Attendance process. This means that you and your child will work together with the EWO over a 12 week programme of strategies and support in order to improve attendance.

It is important to note that once your child has been accepted on the Fast Track to Attendance Programme no further absence will be authorised without medical evidence.

If, after all efforts have been tried, the unauthorised absences persist; these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Full details and information leaflets are available from the school and from the Local Authority.

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Staff will monitor children that go missing from school and report them to the designated safeguarding lead – following normal safeguarding procedures.

From the first day that a child does not attend school and there is no explanation or authorisation of the absence, the following steps should be taken:

- A trained staff member will make contact with the parents/carers (person with parental responsibility for the child) to seek reassurance that the child is safe at home;
- The outcome of the contact should be assessed and if there are any concerns a consultation with the school/establishment/colleges designated safeguarding adviser should take place to consider the child's vulnerability.

In the following circumstances a referral to children's social care and /or the police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of a crime;
- The child is subject of a Child Protection plan;
- The child is subject of s47 enquiries;
- The child is looked after;

- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household;
- There is a history of the family moving frequently;
- There are serious issues of attendance.

The answers to further questions could assist a judgement whether or not to inform LA children's social care and the police:

- In which age range is the child?
 - Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?
 - Have there been any past concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?
 - Was there any significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence?
 - Has the child been a victim of bullying?
 - Are there health reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g.
 - Does the child need essential medication or health care?
 - Was the child noted to be depressed prior to the absence?
 - Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g.
 - Rites of passage or forced marriage planned for the child?
 - Has the child got a disability and/or special educational needs?
 - Have there been past concerns about this child and family which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying? e.g.
- Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?
Is there any known history of domestic violence?
Is there concern about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?

The length of time that a child remains out of school could, of itself, be an alerting factor of risk of harm to the child. Accordingly if a situation is not resolved within 3 days the Education Welfare Service should be contacted, then referrals should be made to the police and LA children's social care, as appropriate over the next two weeks.

Extended leave of absence can be authorised by the head teacher, at which point a return date is set. In these cases the time line for enquiries starts from when the child does not attend school on the expected return date, not from the day the extended leave started.

Notifications and Actions

Day one

If the answers to any of the points set out in the previous section indicates that there are concerns about the child's safety then a referral should be made to the police and children's social care on day one. The education welfare service should be informed and requested to assist in locating the child.

Step one:

- Contact the local police station (24 hour response);
- Any suspicion/evidence of crime must be clearly stated;
- The circumstances and all available information regarding the child and family will be required.

Step two:

- The missing person report will be risk assessed and the local police response team will carry out immediate actions;
- The investigation will be progressed by the police response team, in conjunction with either the local Missing Persons Unit and/or the CID.

Step three:

- The missing person report will generate a notification to the police;
- The police will work with, and refer information to Birmingham City Council children's social care;
- LA children's social care, who must be contacted as soon as possible in these circumstances, will also liaise with the the Police Public Protection Unit in order to identify, and act upon, any suspicion of child abuse or child related crime.

Step four:

The school / educational establishment / college should work in collaboration with children's social care and the police and a safeguarding education representative should participate in any strategy discussions, s47 enquiries and Child Protection Conferences which may arise.

Reasonable enquiry:

If the judgement reached on day one is that there is no reason to believe that the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, then the school may delay making a referral. The process of 'reasonable enquiry' has not been identified in regulations, however this includes school staff checking with all members of staff whom the child may have had contact with, and with the pupil's friends and their parents, siblings and known relatives at this school and others.

School staff should also make telephone calls to any numbers held on record or identified, sending a letter to the last known address, home visits by some school based staff and consultation with local authority staff.

Days two to twenty-eight

If the above response was unsuccessful, the school should contact the local authority Children Missing in Education (CME) Team, Tel: 0121 303 4983. The local authority should make enquiries by visiting the child's home and asking for information from the family's neighbours and their local community, as appropriate.

The CME Team should also check databases within the local authority, use agreed protocols to check local databases, e.g. LA housing, health and the police; check with agencies known to be involved with the family, with the local authority the child moved from originally, and with any local authority to which the child may have moved.

The child's circumstances and vulnerability should be reviewed and reassessed regularly jointly by the school's nominated safeguarding advisor and the CME Officer in consultation with children's social care and the police as appropriate.

Child missing from school for more than four weeks

A child may not be removed from the school roll before the end of four weeks. After 4 weeks the child's Common Transfer file should be uploaded to the Department for Education secure site for the transfer of pupil information when a pupil moves between schools. The Local Authority Children Missing in Education Team must also be informed.

In order to ensure accurate data is collected to allow effective safeguarding, the school will inform the LA of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home education.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and we do not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACT DETAILS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers in an emergency and about other things including absence from school. We must have contact telephone numbers and parental/carer details.

We need your help in ensuring that you have provided us with up to date telephone numbers and contact details – if we don't then something important may be missed.

We will make regular checks on telephone numbers and contact details throughout the year.

SCHOOL TARGETS

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in helping us to meet these targets and to aim higher in all aspects of their education. Targets for the whole school and for the classes are displayed in the school and we hope you will take the opportunity to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95.5% and we will keep you updated regularly about the progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our aim is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.



APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

If you consider you have exceptional circumstances to request a leave of absence during term time, please complete this form and return to the school at least 14 days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Pupil Name Tutor Group/Class

Home Address

First day of absence Date of return to school

Total number of days missed

Exceptional circumstances are as follows:-

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.....
.....

I understand that if the request is unauthorised the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service will be notified of the absence taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. I understand that if I do not pay this will result in legal action.

Name of Parent/Carer making application

Signed Dated

(Please ensure you are giving at least 14 day's notice of the proposed absence)

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- Pupil Name Tutor Group

AUTHORISED: Your request has been authorised for the following dates: ___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___

UNAUTHORISED: Your request has been unauthorised for the following dates: ___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___

It is not considered that the circumstances you describe are exceptional. If you proceed to take the absence a Penalty Notice/s will be issued.

Signed Head Teacher Date ___ / ___ / ___